

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3156

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, TH

SUBJECT: KRIANGSAK PUBLICLY DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS A POLITICIAN

1. IN A SPEECH BEFORE THE HONG KONG FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB APRIL 6, FOLLOWING HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE PRC, PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK REPORTEDLY DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A "NEW POLITICIAN". A THAI JOURNALIST WHO ACCOMPANIED THE PM ON HIS CHINA TRIP TOLD US THAT KRIANGSAK REFERRED TO HIMSELF IN THOSE TERMS DURING TALKS WITH PRC LEADERS, THOUGH ON OCCASION HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WAS ALSO SPEAKING AS A "MILITARY MAN". THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL OF APRIL 13 NOTES THAT THE APRIL 6 SPEECH IN HONG KONG WAS THE FIRST OCCASION ON WHICH KRIANGSAK REFERRED TO HIMSELF PUBLICLY AS A POLITICIAN AND INTERPRETS THE PRIME MINISTER'S CHOICE OF WORDS AS CONFIRMATION THAT KRIANGSAK VIEWS HIMSELF AS MORE THAN SIMPLY A CARETAKER PRIME MINISTER.

2. COMMENT: IT IS UNLIKELY KRIANGSAK WILL SPELL OUT PRECISELY THE FUTURE POLITICAL ROLE HE ENVISIONS FOR HIMSELF UNTIL THE RTG APPROVES THE NEW CONSTITUTION NOW BEING DRAFTED AND ADOPTS GROUND RULES FOR ELECTIONS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR NO LATER THAN APRIL, 1979.

HOWEVER, IN DESCRIBING HIMSELF AS A POLITICIAN, KRIANGSAK HAS TAKEN ANOTHER STEP TOWARD CONFIRMING

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WHAT MOST OBSERVERS HAVE LONG SUSPECTED, I.E., WHEN POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS LEGALLY AUTHORIZED, PARTY ALLIANCES ARE DRAWN AND THE MANEUVERING BEGINS, THE "INTERIM" PRIME MINISTER WILL BE A VERY REAL PART OF THE ACTION.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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